

I was so scared—I didn't think we would make it out alive. I remember people were running everywhere. We waited for the soldiers to come, and when they finally came, they took us to the fairgrounds where we would be safe. It felt like so long before they came.

I survived the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. And I have survived 100 years of painful memories and losses.

By the grace of God, I am still here. I have survived. I have survived to tell this story. I believe that I am still here to share it with you. Hopefully now, you all will listen to us. While we are still here.

The white people who did this to us, were filled with so much hate. It is disgusting that they hate us for no reason except that we are Black people.

We know—most of the people who committed these acts are dead now. The three of us here today, are the only ones left—that we know of. But just because these men are probably dead, the City and County of Tulsa, the State of Oklahoma, and the Tulsa Chamber are still responsible for making it right.

The City and County caused this to happen to us—

The State allowed this happen to us—they didn't protect us.

The Chamber helped ensure that we could not rebuild after the Massacre, including holding us in internment camps.

They owe us something. They owe me something. I have lived much of my life poor. My opportunities were taken from me. And my community, North Tulsa—Black Tulsa—is still messed up today. They didn't rebuild it. Its empty. It's a ghetto. You can help us get some justice.

America is full of examples where people in positions of power, many just like you, have told us to wait. Others have told us it's too late. It seems like justice in America is always so slow or not possible for Blacks. And we are made to feel crazy just for asking for things to be made right. There are always so many excuses for why justice is so slow or never happens at all.

I am here today, at 106-years-old, looking at you all in the eye. We've waited too long, and I am tired. We are tired. I am asking you today to give us some peace. Please give me, my family, and my community some justice. Thank you.

HUGHES VAN ELLIS WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES, MAY 19, 2021

My name is Hughes Van Ellis. I am 100 years old. And I am a survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Because of the Massacre, my family was driven from our home. We were left with nothing. We were made refugees in our own country.

My childhood was hard and we didn't have much. We worried what little we had would be stolen from us. Just like it was stolen in Tulsa. You may have been taught that when something is stolen from you, you can go to the courts to be made whole. You can go to the courts to get justice. This wasn't the case for us. The courts in Oklahoma wouldn't hear us. The federal courts said we were too late.

We were made to feel that our struggles were unworthy of justice. That we were less valued than whites, that we weren't fully American. We were shown that in the United States, not all men were equal under law. We were shown that when Black voices called out for justice, no one cared.

But we still had faith things would get better. We still believed in the promise of America and in the cause of freedom.

I did my duty in World War II. I served in combat in the Far East with the 234th AAA

Gun Battalion. We were an all-black battalion. I fought for freedom abroad, even though it was ripped away from me at home, even after my home and my community were destroyed, I did it because I believed, in the end, America would get it right.

When I returned home from the war, I didn't find any of the freedom I was fighting for overseas. Unlike white servicemen, I wasn't entitled to GI Bill benefits because of the color of my skin. I came home to segregation. A separate and unequal America. But still I believed in America.

This is why we are still speaking up today, even at the age of 100. The Tulsa Race Massacre isn't a footnote in a history book for us. We live with it every day and the thought of what Greenwood was and what it could have been. We aren't just black and white pictures on a screen, we are flesh and blood. I was there when it happened, I'm still here. My sister was there when it happened, she's still here.

We're not asking for a handout. All we are asking for is for a chance to be treated like a first-class citizen who truly is a beneficiary of the promise that this is a land where there is "liberty and justice for all."

We are asking for justice for a lifetime of ongoing harm. Harm that was caused by the Massacre. You can give us the chance to be heard and give us a chance to be made whole after all these years and after all our struggle.

I still believe in America. I still believe in the ideals that I fought overseas to defend. And I believe if given the chance you will do the right thing and justice will be served. Thank you.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MOTHER VIOLA FLETCHER FOR THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES, WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021

My name is Viola Fletcher, or Mother Fletcher. I am the daughter of Lucinda Ellis and John Wesley Ford of Tulsa, Oklahoma. I am the sister of Hughes Van Ellis, who is also here today. And I am a survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Two weeks ago, I celebrated my 107th birthday.

Today, I am in Washington, D.C. for the first time in my life. I am here seeking justice. I am here asking my country to acknowledge what happened in Tulsa in 1921.

On May 31st 1921, I went to bed in my family's home in the Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa. The neighborhood I feel asleep in that night was rich—not just in terms of wealth, but in culture, community, and heritage. My family had a beautiful home. We had great neighbors and I had friends to play with. I felt safe. I had everything a child could need. I had a bright future ahead of me. Greenwood could have given me the chance to truly make it in this country.

Within a few hours, all of that was gone. The night of the Massacre I was woken up by my family. My parents and five siblings were there. I was told we had to leave. And that was it.

I will never forget the violence of the white mob when we left our house. I still see Black men being shot, and Black bodies lying in the street. I still smell smoke and see fire. I still see Black businesses being burned. I still hear airplanes flying overhead. I hear the screams. I live through the Massacre every day.

Our country may forget this history. I cannot. I will not. The other survivors do not. And our descendants do not.

When my family was forced to leave Tulsa, I lost my chance at an education. I never finished school past the fourth grade. I have never made much money. My country, state, and city took a lot from me. Despite this, I spent time supporting the war effort in the

shipyards of California. But for most of my life, I was a domestic worker serving white families. I never made much money. To this day, I can barely afford my everyday needs. All the while the City of Tulsa have unjustly used the names and stories of victims like me to enrich itself and its White allies through the \$30 million raised by the Tulsa Centennial Commission while I continue to live in poverty.

I am 107 years old and have never seen justice. I pray that one day I will. I have been blessed with a long life—and have seen the best and worst of this country. I think about the horrors inflicted upon Black people in this country every day.

This Subcommittee has the power to lead us down a better path. I am asking that my country acknowledge what has happened to me. The trauma. The pain. The loss. And I ask that survivors and descendants be given a chance to seek justice. Open the courtroom doors to us.

I believe we must acknowledge America's sins. It is the least we can do.

I saw what happened here on January 6th this year. It broke my heart. It reminded me of what happened 100 years ago. And now, I hear some of you on TV saying it didn't happen, like we didn't see it with our own eyes. It happened on live TV. 100 years ago, there was no TV, but you have me here right now. You see Mother Randle. You see my brother, Hughes Van Ellis. We lived this history. We can't ignore it. It lives with us.

We lost everything that day. Our homes. Our churches. Our newspapers. Our theaters. Our lives. Greenwood represented the best of what was possible for Black people in America—and for all people. No one cared about us for almost 100 years. We, and our history, have been forgotten, washed away. This Congress must recognize us, and our history. For Black Americans. For white Americans. For all Americans. That's some justice.

Thank you.

## HONORING FIREFIGHTER LOUIE MARTIN

### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Louie Martin for his 10 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Martin has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE TULSA  
GREENWOOD MASSACRE

SPEECH OF

**HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th Commemoration of the Tulsa-Greenwood Race Massacre, where on May 31–June 1, 1921, a white mob of thousands of people shot and murdered Black residents of America's "Black Wall Street" in Tulsa, Oklahoma, looted their homes and businesses, and burned more than a thousand homes, churches, schools, and businesses. The horrific events of this deadly attack were the result of a series of failures of leadership that ultimately fostered race-based violence, discrimination, and oppression.

This was a failure of law enforcement to protect Tulsa's Black residents and maintain civil order. A failure of the judicial system, as many of the residents who fled the Massacre were detained in internment camps immediately following the Massacre and a grand jury placed the blame entirely on the Black community and indicted 85 people—mostly African Americans—with Massacre-related offenses. A failure of our American promises of the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Justice was not served. No White person was ever held individually accountable for crimes committed during the Massacre, and the vast majority of survivors and their descendants were never directly compensated for these harms.

The attack on the thriving Black community continued on throughout the years and is evident even in today's society; as the community sustained millions of dollars of property damage and many Black survivors of the Tulsa massacre and their descendants have not been able to recoup the wealth that had been stolen or destroyed during the Massacre. And still today, despite calls for justice and accountability, our government leaders continue to fail the victims of the Tulsa-Greenwood Massacre and their descendants by refusing action to right the wrongs that were perpetrated on innocent community members 100 years ago. Over the decades, local ordinances to prevent rebuilding, redlining, and so-called "urban renewal" policies have prevented Black Tulsans from rebuilding a thriving community. Expressways, funded by the federal government, literally cut through areas of Greenwood, displacing Black families and businesses.

Madam Speaker, though we are 100 years past the heinous Tulsa-Greenwood Massacre, Black Americans are unfortunately not far removed from the continued injustice of systemic racism and oppressive tactics that block upward mobility out of poverty and suppress opportunities to create and maintain generational wealth. As we take time to recall the injustice of this Massacre and continue the call for justice for the descendants, let us also reflect on the continued efforts of injustice that plague minority communities today. We need accountability, we need economic justice, and we need criminal justice reform. We cannot continue to delay justice and equality. The time for change is now.

HONORING DOCTOR STEPHEN  
PLYMATE AS THE RECIPIENT OF  
THE 2020 WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON  
AWARD

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 19, 2021*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Doctor Stephen Plymate on being the 2020 recipient of the William S. Middleton Award for outstanding scientific contributions and achievements in the areas of biomedical and bio-behavioral research relevant to the healthcare of Veterans. This prestigious award is the highest honor given by the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service.

Doctor Plymate, a veteran himself, is an endocrinologist at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System and associate director of the Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center. He is credited with scientific breakthroughs that identified the biological mechanism underlying lethal, castration-resistant prostate cancer. Prostate cancer cells can become resistant to a common form of treatment and Doctor Plymate's discovery identified why traditional therapies have failed and spurred innovation for newer, potentially more effective therapies.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Veterans, and over 500,000 known Veterans are currently battling this disease. Doctor Plymate's research will save the lives of countless Veterans and civilians alike. Once again, the Puget Sound VA has recruited the brightest and produced research that will revolutionize medicine.

Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Doctor Stephen Plymate's on his groundbreaking research and being the well-deserved recipient of the 2020 Middleton Award.

ANTONIO ESQUIBEL

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 19, 2021*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Antonio Esquibel, a Northglenn, Colo. City Councilmember, former Mayor, a Vietnam Veteran, and a great Coloradoan.

Mr. Esquibel has been a resident and a staple in the Northglenn community for more than a decade, during which time he has dedicated much of his time and energy into serving his community and fellow neighbors. Throughout his tenure serving the City of Northglenn, Mr. Esquibel has held numerous positions in city government, including Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, City Councilmember, Finance Committee member, and Adams County 12 School Board liaison. Mr. Esquibel was first elected to the City Council in 2015 where he served as the Ward 4 representative before being appointed to Mayor Pro Tem in 2017. He was then appointed Mayor in June of 2019 and proceeded to serve out the term before returning to his role as a Councilmember. As Councilmember

and Mayor, he has been a strong advocate and champion for education and mental health issues.

Mr. Esquibel's dedication to the Northglenn community follows a lifetime of public service in which he worked as a counselor in Adams 12 Five Star Schools and served our nation in the Army during the Vietnam War. Mr. Esquibel served in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1974, ending his service with the rank of Sergeant. His service included time in Okinawa where he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Meritorious Unit Commendation and the Good Conduct Medal (1st and 2nd Awards). His primary specialty was as a military police officer and secondary specialty was with the 11th Bravo Company as a Light Weapons Infantryman. In addition to his service to Northglenn and to our country, Mr. Esquibel is a loving husband to Dr. Deborah Esquibel Hunt and is a devoted father and grandfather.

While our state has been blessed with capable leadership throughout its history, few rise to the caliber and reputation of Mr. Esquibel. I wish Antonio Esquibel all the best in retirement and send gratitude for his service to the Northglenn community, the great State of Colorado, and the United States of America.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER MIKE  
STANLEY

**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 19, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Mike Stanley for his 30 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Stanley has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. VICKY HARTZLER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 19, 2021*

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, on Friday, May 14, 2021, I was unable to vote. Had I been present I would have voted YEA on Roll Call 143.